

## **IDAHO STATE JOURNAL**

### **ISU to get \$744,000 infusion from feds**

By Dan Boyd - Journal Writer

POCATELLO - Dinosaur bones and dental hygiene might not seem to have much in common, but thanks to federal legislation, both entities will soon be getting some financial love.

The supplemental additions to the 2005 Omnibus Appropriations Bill, sculpted by both houses of Congress and announced Monday, includes a total of \$744,000 for Idaho State University, including portions for the ISU dental hygiene program and the Virtual Museum of Natural History.

Sen. Larry Craig and Rep. Mike Simpson are members of the appropriations committees in their respective legislative branches and both trumpeted the importance of the news after finalizing the fiscal year's budgeting.

"This funding is a crucial component of our ongoing efforts to expand the educational opportunities offered to ISU's students and the people of Southeast Idaho," Simpson said in a press release.

When the largess is distributed, the dental hygiene program will receive \$496,000 in appropriations while the Museum of Natural History is slated to take in \$248,000.

The dental hygiene program will initiate a master's degree component this fall and also received \$400,000 in federal dollars last year.

As for the museum's share, imaging developer Ralph Chapman said new equipment could be added to the two laser scanners already owned as the project seeks to establish itself on campus.

Currently housed on the top floor of the Museum of Natural History, the project will soon be known as the Idaho Virtualization Laboratory and centers around creating 3-D virtual equivalents of human skeletons and entire animals.

"It's not just pretty pictures, although it certainly could be," Chapman said.

He added the technology can be used for research in biomechanics and general education and is also used to create special effects in many Hollywood movies.

ISU Financial Vice President Ken Prolo said the federal appropriations are critical to establishing such programs that might fall outside the university's core offerings.

"Without the funding, those activities would have ceased," he said.

The 2005 fiscal year ends Sept. 30 and the 2006 fiscal year then begins Oct. 1. The original Omnibus Appropriations Bill for 2005 was signed into law last December.

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